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Page Denied

4 September 1969

25X1

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CONTENTS

25X1

Arms Control: The Soviet draft seabeds treaty has drawn considerable support. (Page 5)

25X1

25X1

Page Denied

Next 5 Page(s) In Document Denied

Arms Control: The delegations to the disarmament conference at Geneva apparently are prepared to give substantial support to the revised Soviet draft for a treaty on seabeds arms control.

The Soviet proposal, submitted on 19 August, is regarded by US allies and by the nonaligned nations participating in the conference as a significant move by Moscow to accommodate the US position. The Russians will accept the less comprehensive US proposal for a ban only on weapons of mass destruction, have drawn closer to the more limited US position on verification, and are no longer calling for actual inspection of undersea installations.

The principal differences remaining between the US and Soviet approaches is the extent of the seabeds to which the proposed treaty would apply. The US favors application beyond the three-mile limit, while the Soviets and nearly all the other conference delegations prefer that the ban begin 12 miles from shore.

The US delegation in Geneva has reported that the conference participants anticipate a response from Washington to the Soviet draft in short order. Most of the conferees expect that an extended debate between the US and the USSR will lessen the chances of concluding a seabeds treaty this year and could affect other arms limitations negotiations with Moscow. Some of the nations meeting at Geneva may be prepared to take the arms control measure to the less-controlled UN disarmament forum if progress at the conference is not forthcoming.

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Next 7 Page(s) In Document Denied

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